



CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

LOCKING DOWN

ST. LOUIS • MORE LIMITS ENACTED ON GATHERINGS
MISSOURI • STATE ANNOUNCES FIRST VIRUS DEATH
NATION • TRUMP SIGNS RELIEF PACKAGE INTO LAW



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“I am trying to do what I can to stop the spread of the coronavirus in the building,” said Casey Millburg, who disinfects a microphone on Wednesday at the Missouri Capitol in Jefferson City during debate over emergency funding for the coronavirus outbreak.

MISSOURI RESPONSE

WU confirms two physicians tested positive

ST. LOUIS — St. Louis and St. Louis County on Wednesday banned social gatherings of more than nine or 10 people in an increasingly desperate bid to slow the rapid spread of the coronavirus, even as reports continued to pour in of new COVID-19 cases across Missouri and Illinois — and of Missouri’s first death from the virus.

The number of Illinois cases soared to 288 from 160 on Tuesday, said Gov. J.B. Pritzker, and included a new case in St. Clair County, bringing the total there to three.

Missouri Gov. Mike Parson announced that Missouri numbers had bounded upward, too, rising to 24 on Wednesday from 15 on Tuesday. Parson also reported the state’s first death: A resident older than 60 who lived in Boone County, home to the University of Missouri, who tested positive on Tuesday after recently traveling abroad.

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US RESPONSE

Lawmakers already turning to new package

WASHINGTON — By a sweeping bipartisan tally, the Senate on Wednesday approved a \$100 billion-plus bill to boost testing for the coronavirus and guarantee paid sick leave for millions of workers hit by it — and President Donald Trump quickly signed it. But lawmakers and the White House had already turned their focus to the administration’s far bigger \$1 trillion plan to stabilize the economy as the pandemic threatens financial ruin for individuals and businesses.

Details on Trump’s economic rescue plan remain sparse — and it’s sure to grow with lawmaker add-ons — but its centerpiece is to dedicate \$500 billion to start issuing direct payments to Americans by early next month. It would also funnel cash to businesses to help keep workers on payroll as widespread sectors of the \$21 trillion U.S. economy all but shut down.

In a memorandum, the Treasury

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EMERGENCY POWERS

Trump invokes ‘wartime’ act to speed reaction

WASHINGTON — Describing himself as a “wartime president” fighting an invisible enemy, President Donald Trump on Wednesday invoked rarely used emergency powers to marshal critical medical supplies against the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump tapped his authority under the 70-year-old Defense Production Act to give the government more power to steer production by private companies and try to overcome shortages in masks, ventilators and other supplies.

Yet he seemed to minimize the urgency of the decision, later tweeting that he “only signed the Defense Production Act to combat the Chinese Virus should we need to invoke it in a worst case scenario in the future.”

“Hopefully there will be no need,” he added, “but we are all in this TOGETHER!”

The mixed messaging came as Trump

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VOTING

Parson pushes April elections to June

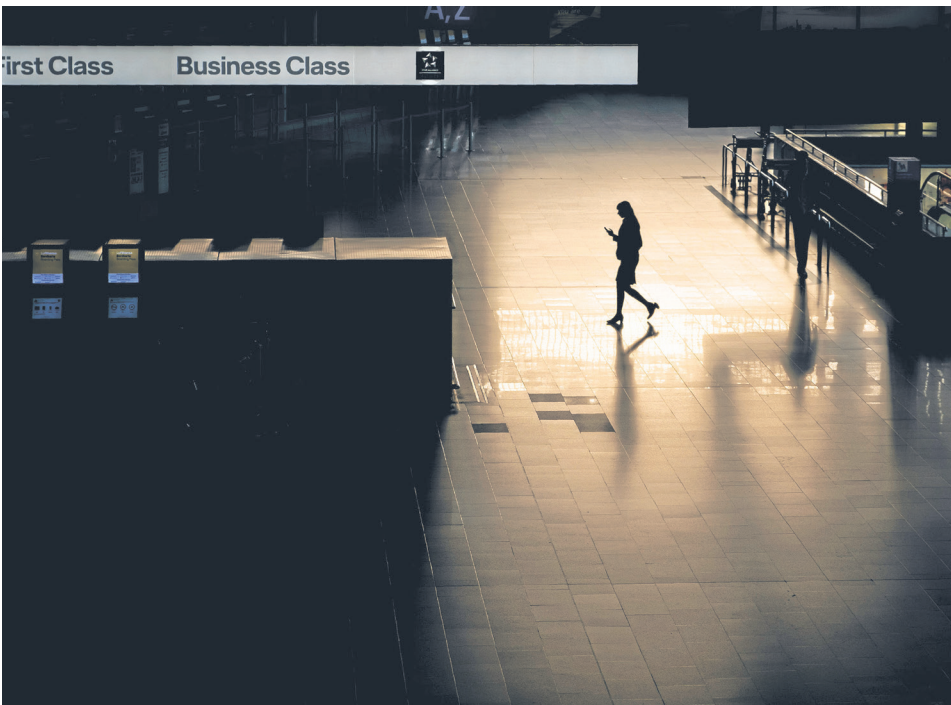
JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Mike Parson signed an executive order Wednesday moving the date of local government elections from April 7 to June 2.

“Given the growing concern surrounding COVID-19 and the large number of people elections attract, postponing Missouri’s municipal elections is a necessary step to help combat the spread of the virus and protect the health and safety of Missouri voters,” Parson said in a statement.

Parson acted as many local election officials across the state, including in the St. Louis area, were already planning to go to court to try to move the April election to June 2.

On Wednesday morning, in fact,

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MICHAEL PROBST, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A passenger walks through an almost deserted terminal at the airport in Frankfurt, Germany, on Wednesday. Airlines worldwide are drastically reducing flights, parking jets, raising capital and cutting costs in an effort to save money as air travel demand takes a dramatic downturn.

THE LATEST

MISSOURI HOUSE

State spending to battle virus is boosted by \$40 million • A4

SCHOOLS

Parson defends decision not to close schools statewide • A6

AUTOMAKERS

GM, Ford and others are halting production in the US • A11

HEALTH CARE

Front-line doctors, nurses fear infecting their families • A7

STOCK MARKET

Dow closes below 20,000 in another ugly trading day • A17

TV anchors stay tuned in during isolation • A2

Riverfront Times lays off staff, suspends print • A2

Prisons turn to extra cleaning and screening • A3

Virus digest: Happenings of note around region • A4

Defense Production Act is a tool in times of war • A5

Trump defends using ‘Chinese virus’ label • A10

Police officers shift priorities as crisis grows • A10

Early victim of outbreak is business innovation • A11

Census bureau stops field operations for 2 weeks • A17

We could all use a dose of Laila Anderson • B1

NHL: Anaheim game doesn’t increase risk for Blues • B1

Mizzou coaches adjust to shuttered seasons • B1

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THUNDERSTORMS
TOMORROW
52°/30°
MOSTLY CLOUDY
WEATHER
B6



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